

RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE BROOKLINE SCHOOL COMMITTEE (JOINT MEETING WITH THE SELECT BOARD) ON TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2020 AT 5:30 PM (REMOTE VIA WEBEX). STATUTORY NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS FILED WITH THE TOWN CLERK.

School Committee Members Present: Ms. Schreiner-Oldham (Chair), Ms. Federspiel (Vice Chair), Ms. Charlupski, Ms. Ditkoff, Mr. Pearlman, and Ms. Scotto.

School Committee Members Absent: Dr. Abramowitz and Ms. Monopoli.

Select Board Members Present: Select Board Chair Bernard W. Greene, Select Board Member Benjamin J. Franco, Select Board Member Nancy S. Heller, Select Board Member Heather Hamilton, and Select Board Member Raul Fernandez.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES: JOINT PUBLIC HEARING

Joint Public Hearing and possible vote on the following warrant article for the 2020 Annual Town Meeting:

Warrant Article 7 - High School Additional Appropriation

Select Board member Nancy Heller made some introductions of the project team that will be making the presentation. Also available will be staff; Associate Town Counsel, Jonathan Simpson, Finance Director Jeana Franconi, Deputy Town Administrator, Melissa Goff, Building Department Ray Masak, Co-Chairs George Cole and Susan Wolf Ditkoff.

Why do we need an additional appropriation for this project?

Nancy Heller: To start from the beginning, in 2016 we worked on the complicated Brookline High School renovation project that came in at \$270-\$348 million. To bring cost down we looked at a different complex approach using the MBTA station and property and 111 Cypress Street. The plans went to Town Meeting and since then the market conditions have drastically changed along with the complexities of the MBTA. On the other hand the bond rates have significantly declined. Still there is a result in the project cost to put before the voters, adding an additional \$32 million in bonds.

Andy Felix from Hill International began the presentation:

Project status: BHS Expansion options

Option 1. \$181.5 M

Option 2 \$212.2 M – Option 2* \$271.1 M

Option 3 \$348.3 M

Option 4* 149.9M

Options 1,2,2*and 3* were not as palpable so we looked at a fourth option to take the Cypress Street parcel by eminent domain and build over the T tracks. That project cost was \$149.9 million, added on to that cost:

1. Cypress 111 Cypress Site Acquisition
2. Cypress Filed Renovation
3. Additional MBTA Real estate Costs
4. Cost Escalation
5. Swing Space Cost
6. MBTA Station Renovation
7. MBTA Plaza

For a total \$205.6 million.

Those costs are now estimated at \$237.8.

Andy Felix reviewed the breakdown of the costs.

- Hard costs
- Soft costs
- FF&E & Technology
- Real Estate Costs
- Other Costs

What's Changed:

Unprecedented escalation in construction

Unknown conditions

STEM basement level

Community input – MBTA Plaza enlargement of the plaza, parking

Multiple submission and meeting with the MBTA, MBTA asked for additional reinforcements to the structural building. Worked night and weekends

Board member Heller added that there was some indication in Feb/March that we were making some progress, then COVID hit. We had to reinitiate those discussions, and in the meantime we have the Davis Path footbridge that has to come down. We are working with the MBTA and DPW Commissioner to coordinate a larger shut down and piggy back on the MBTA work in June; that would result in significant savings.

RECAP:

Unforeseen cost increases

Market conditions – Platform Design changes/ MBTA additional diversions and other force account costs.

- Unknown conditions – unsuitable soils
 - Existing Roberts Wing structural reinforcing, take the Roberts Wing down in totality
- COVID19 impact – MBTA temporary suspension, continue to submit request to the MBTA

Choices to be made to make up the \$32 million

If no additional funding the following would be reconsidered:

- Further removal of scopes of work
- Tappan gym
- Science labs

- Deferred maintenance
- Cypress field

Finance Director, Jeana Franconi reviewed the interest savings on the bonds.

Public hearing:

School Committee: Chair Julie Schreiner-Oldham opened the School Committee meeting.
Present: Helen Charlupski, Barbara Scotto, David Pearlman, Susan Wolf Ditkoff, Suzanne Federspiel

Questions:

Board Member Fernandez: when can we expect to know the recent impactful events not currently projected; will these costs be baked in before Town Meeting. When can we expect an update?

Board member Heller: Hard to say heard some wild estimates on COVID in the past few days. Staff has been canvassing construction sites to determine what kind of cost they see, and reported back that the costs are less than we originally thought. The other piece of COVID is we do not know where dollars will come from; we do know some federal funding under CARES act may be a funding source. It is not easy to predict this before we get to Town Meeting, we need to move forward.

Ray Masak relayed that he has been canvassing many projects around to get an estimated cost and he thinks they are not as great as we feared; I understand that is not a good answer as well. The only way figure this out is to canvas neighboring projects.

Helen Charlupski: If the MBTA were to partner with us in a better way, that would be less costly and we may not need to borrow as much.

Melissa Goff: The project team is at \$32million we could do a bond revision if it is lower.

Helen Charlupski: Are contingencies used up?

Nancy Heller: we are getting there.

Ben Franco: Are there still some subcontractors or is the project fully bid out?

Andy Felix: some packages still need to be signed up. The Tappan Gym has not been bid yet, or the third floor.

Ben Franco: On COVID related costs that are unknown, the MBTA not cooperating and the material shortages; had that cost been included in the \$32M?

Andy Felix: those costs were unknown when the article went in. Depending on whether we can piggy back on MBTA work. If we can we could significantly pick up that time if everything lines up with footbridge work.

Susan Wolf Ditkoff: The Davis Path footbridge was not budgeted for. This footbridge is very important for the High School students going over it to the Old Lincoln School.

Hal Mason, Assistant BHS Headmaster gave a brief review of the footbridge location and safety concerns. It is very important to get this bridge open.

Nancy Heller: The DPW commissioner is aware of the issue and he hopes to have a temporary bridge in place.

Public hearing:

Nancy O'Connor, Vice Chair of the Park and Recreation Commission:

1. The Tappan Gym, what currently is the budget for that and do we know what is going to be done there. This project was supposed to be incorporated in the 1995 High School renovation project and was taken out of that project.
2. The Recreation Department and the Park and Recreation Commission began the process for the Cypress field in 2017. The debate on synthetic or grass is still ongoing. We provide a safe and inclusive multi-generational park design to serve the whole community, the High School and Parks and Recreation programs. I hope this is included in the project design.

Andy Felix: we are still within the \$32m and looking at some value engineering ideas. We need to see what happens with the STEM and 22 Tappan Street. It will depend on Town Meeting.

Nancy Heller: It is correct that the gym was planned to be renovated years ago, but there were large infrastructure issues, and it did not happen. This needs to be done desperately. This is not only a school resource but a community resource. She will try very hard to keep it in the budget.

Nancy O'Connor: are we still taking about quasi combined entrance with the aquatics center or is that gone and we are just dealing with the gym itself?

Andy Felix: A combined entrance. We looked to further suggest some reductions in the scope; not having a new entrance bump out and took a look at the community room and the access will be at the front lobby.

This public hearing closed at 6:36 pm.